

OPINION
& EDITORIALS



The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER

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Uncuffing season:
Why your ex shouldn't have the keys to your digital life

Key insights:

- Many people fail to complete a "digital divorce" after breakups, leaving shared passwords for bank accounts, smart homes, and streaming services active.
- Shared access is often being used as a tool for stalking and harassment, making those credentials a serious privacy risk.
- Cybersecurity experts warn that securing your master keys — such as primary email and MFA — is as critical as returning a physical spare key.

Summer is often associated with holidays and fresh starts — but experts also point to it as a season of breakups. The so-called “uncuffing season,” usually peaks in summer months, when the desire for change and the stress of travel or planning can put extra strain on long-term relationships.

After the breakup, when the boxes are packed and the keys are returned, many are still forgetting the most important keys of all: their passwords.

“While breakups are a normal part of life, they can also leave behind serious digital security risks. This is especially true for couples who have shared not only a home, but also passwords, accounts, and connected devices. A shared Netflix account is usually the first thing that comes to mind, but that’s actually the least of the concerns. The real danger lies in digital lingering — where ex-partners retain access to sensitive accounts, leading to a growing number of digital stalking cases,” says Karolis Arbaciauskas, head of product at cybersecurity company NordPass and its parent organization Nord Security.

When they just can’t let go

In one recent case, a San Diego woman was accused of spying on her ex-husband through a Ring security camera after allegedly logging in with credentials she already had. She admitted she kept tabs on him and live-streamed hundreds of hours from inside his home.

Other incidents are less intrusive but equally bold. For example, a woman discovered she still had access to her ex-boyfriend’s Uber account and used it for free rides for some time before being disconnected.

The harassment can also take a more psychological turn. In another instance, a man reported that his ex-boyfriend was able to harass him by repeatedly ringing his smart doorbell remotely in the middle of the night. In a fully connected smart home, shared access means an ex-partner could theoretically control everything from the lights and music to the heating.

Financial ties are often the hardest to break. One Reddit user shared a story about her ex-partner, who still had her checking account linked to his payment card long after their split. He continued to make unauthorized transactions with her money, eventually forcing her to involve attorneys and report violations of a restraining order.

Digital spare keys

“With shared digital access now a routine part of living together, a breakup can open the door to new forms of harassment and control. The lesson here is simple: after a breakup or divorce, changing any passwords previously shared with a partner should be treated as an urgent security step. Ideally, this digital divorce should be performed transparently and in coordination with a former partner, but safety comes first. If a joint approach is impossible, you should prioritize securing all accounts in your name,” says Arbaciauskas. He adds: “In the case of NordPass, the owner of the Family plan (the one who pays) has the power to remove members or revoke their access. Once a member is removed, they lose access to vaults with shared items. Private vaults remain private. Even in a Family plan, no one can see what is in another person’s private vault. If a member is kicked out, they keep their own private vault and the items they created themselves — they just lose the Family subscription benefits and shared access.”

How to perform a "digital divorce": Your security checklist

- Prioritize email: Your primary email is the gateway to your entire digital life. Change the password and security questions immediately.
- Audit recovery info: Ensure all backup emails and phone numbers belong exclusively to you.
- Refresh your MFA: Ensure multi-factor authentication (MFA) is tied to a device or app only you can access.
- Clear digital wallets: Update passwords for PayPal, Venmo, and other payment apps.
- Secure banking: Reset access to all checking, savings, and investment portals.
- Unlink shared cards: Remove any saved credit cards from retail sites (like for Amazon) where your ex still has access.
- Reclaim the house: Revoke access to smart locks, Wi-Fi routers, and security cameras.
- Cut the stream: Change credentials for Netflix, Spotify, and Disney+ to prevent "digital lingering."
- Force a hard disconnect: Use account settings to "sign out of all devices" to ensure old logins are officially dead.
- Update device PINs: Change the local passcodes on your phone, tablet, and laptop.
- Disable location sharing: Turn off "Find My" permissions or shared maps that broadcast your real-time position.
- Check the cloud: Reset Apple ID or Google Drive passwords to stop automatic syncing of private photos and messages.

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Letters To The Editor:

WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND? Send letters to newspaper@ocentral.com

Dear Editor:

This week we celebrated the opening of the Gordie Howe International Bridge, a project that will strengthen the connection between Canada and the United States for generations to come. It's a powerful reminder that when we work together, we create jobs, grow our economies and build a stronger future on both sides of the border.

That's why I took Ontario's message directly to the American people this week in an interview with CBS News.

I had one simple message for our American friends and neighbours: let's grow trade, create jobs and build together.

Ontario and the United States have one of the strongest economic partnerships in the world. Millions of jobs depend on it. Businesses on both sides of the border depend on it. Families depend on it.

I believe we can grow that partnership even stronger.

But let me also be clear: Ontario will never back down and we won't be bullied. I'll do whatever it takes to stand up for Ontario workers and businesses.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Doug Ford
Leader, Ontario PC Party

Dear Editor:

I normally do not write letters. But I feel so alone. No one seems to care. Let me explain. The other day. Me and my daughter decided to go downtown on a school matter. We were happy as one could be. The weather was nice. We parked our car and walked about four block on King St. Oshawa. At the corner there were two people. Scruffy looking. They seem to be arguing about something. We walk a few yards from them... and along the alley there was a woman on her knees performing oral sex on some man... I was shocked. I did not know how to act, respond. I looked at my daughter and for the first time in my life did not know what to say. We both looked at each other and walked quickly to the car. Two days later and we still have not talked about it. I called the police. They said they could not do anything about it... that they would send someone out. I am total shock. Is this our Oshawa?

Completely and totally disgusted

Barabara Kindle, Oshawa

Dear Editor:

I live in Pickering and thinking of moving in one of those newly erected buildings. I have concern and no one seems to be able to answer my question. Pickering Nuclear Generating Station are officially categorized by specific radial distances rather than a standalone 5km designation, featuring the 3 km Automatic Action Zone, the 10 km Detailed Planning Zone, and broader regional tiers. Financial Compensation and InsuranceInsurance Exclusions: Standard home insurance policies in Ontario specifically exclude damage or loss caused by nuclear incidents.Liability Limits: Under Canada's Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act, the plant operator's direct liability is capped by law, which critics warn may leave widespread and complete private property losses under-compensated in a catastrophic disaster. Would this mean. I still have to pay the taxes on that property?

High rise building in the area to me should be offered at a big discount due to the risk factor and general exposure as the facility is constantly releasing steam. Who should I be speaking with in regards to this very concerning issue.

Jeff McDonald, Pickering.

SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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